



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

To: Town Council

From: Matt Hart, Town Manager

Date: December 11, 2018

CC: P. Alair, M. McGovern, T. Dumais

Subject: Ordinance (Wenograd, Dodge) Permitting Accessory Apartments in One-Family Residence Districts. (999)

Background: The proposed ordinance is designed to promote additional housing choice type and affordability by seeking to permit accessory apartments in all one-family residence districts.

The current standards in Section 177-23 of the Zoning Ordinance permit accessory apartments (described as dwelling units) in two limited circumstances. The first permits “guests or domestic employees” that are employed on premises by the owner of the main building to live in accessory buildings provided there are no kitchen facilities. The second type permits dwelling units in accessory buildings provided that they do not contain more than three rooms in total and that the lot on which the unit is located contains twice the lot area required for the zoning district.

The proposed ordinance would eliminate these standards and provide for a more flexible and modern approach that permits a traditional accessory apartment model. The ordinance would not permit units to be located in detached accessory buildings but instead would require they be contained within or built onto existing homes. It proposes standards to address size, occupancy, parking, and architecture. Perhaps most importantly, the proposal would require approval of each unit via a special use permit issued by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission following a public hearing.

The Community Planning and Physical Services Committee has discussed of the concept of accessory dwelling units during several meetings over the course of 2018. The proposed draft reflects the outcome of those discussions. During its November 21st meeting, the Committee voted 2-1 to advance the ordinance to the full Council, with Councilors Wenograd and Dodge as sponsors.

Operational Impact: Staff anticipates that the proposed ordinance would have minimal operational impact on the Town.

Financial Impact: Staff does not anticipate that the proposed amendment would have any financial impact on the Town.

Legal Review: The Corporation Counsel's office has reviewed the proposed ordinance for form and legality.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Council move to receive the proposed ordinance and to immediately refer it to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission and the Capitol Region Council of Governments for their required review, and to schedule a Public Hearing within not less than thirty nor more than sixty days.

Attachments: An Ordinance Permitting Accessory Apartments in Single Family Residential Districts